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# DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES  
*Helping people. It's who we are and what we do.*



Cindy Pitlock, DNP  
Administrator

## **Nevada Children's Behavioral Health Consortium** *Meeting Minutes* December 2, 2021

**All members participated via Lifesize technology (video or audio)**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Braden Schrag – Commission on Behavioral Health  
Cara Paoli – Washoe County Human Services Agency  
Charlene Frost – Family Member Receiving Services  
Dan Musgrove – Clark County Children's Mental Health Consortium  
Dena Schmidt – Aging and Disabilities Services Division  
Ellen Richardson-Adams – Division of Public and Behavioral Health  
Jacquelyn Kleinedler – Washoe County Children's Mental Health Consortium  
Karen Taycher – Nevada PEP  
Katherine Loudon – Washoe County School District  
Lawanda Jones – Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Agency  
Lisa Linning – Clark County Department of Family Services  
Melissa Washabaugh – Rural Children's Mental Health Consortium?  
Michelle Sandoval – Division of Public and Behavioral Health  
Sarah Dearborn – Division of Health Care Financing and Policy  
Ross Armstrong – Division of Child and Family Services

### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Alexa Rodriguez – Clark County Department of Juvenile Justice  
Jennifer Bevacqua – Eagle Quest (Group Home Provider)  
Sandy Arguello – Koinonia Family Services

### **STAFF AND GUESTS:**

Alissa Lucke – Guest  
Amna Kawaja – Division of Child and Family Services  
Ann Polakowski – Division of Child and Family Services  
Dana Walburn – Office of Safe and Respectful Learning  
Jennifer Lords – Guest  
Jessica Flood – Nevada Rural Hospital Partners  
Jennifer Richards – Guest  
Katherine Loudon – Washoe County School District  
Kelly Marschall – Guest  
Kristen Rivas – Division of Child and Family Services

Megan Freeman – Division of Child and Family Services  
Stephanie Dotson – Division of Child and Family Services  
Stephanie Woodard – Division of Public and Behavioral Health  
Susie Miller – Division of Child and Family Services  
Salwa Philips – Division of Child and Family Services  
Samantha Jayme – Guest  
Tina Gerber-Winn – Division of Public and Behavioral Health (Retired)  
William Wyss – Division of Child and Family Services  
4632 – Telephone Attendee/No Response

**1. Call to Order, Roll Call, Introductions**

Ellen Richardson-Adams, Commission on Behavioral Health Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021. Kristen Rivas, Division of Child & Family Services, conducted roll call and quorum was established.

**2. Public Comment**

Jacquelyn Kleinedler observed that there are multiple meetings and workgroups across the state which have the same members and appear to be discussing and working on the same issues and goals. She wants everyone to find ways to streamline efforts and communications to achieve the same mutual goals discussed in each of these different efforts and coalitions.

**3. Approval of the July 22, 2021, Meeting Minutes**

**MOTION:** Dan Musgrove made a motion to accept the minutes from the July 22, 2021 meeting.

**SECOND:** Dr. Lisa Linning

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously

**4. Update on Membership and Vote on New Members**

- Tabitha Johnson’s term on the Commission on Behavioral Health ended, and Braden Schrag will be replacing her as the new representative to the NCBHC.
- Lawanda Jones, Representative of the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Agency (SAPTA)
- Katherine Loudon, Representative of Washoe County School District

**MOTION:** Dan Musgrove made a motion to vote to adopt all three members to serve as representatives on the Consortium.

**SECOND:** Dena Schmidt seconded the motion.

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously with no opposition or abstention.

**5. Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) Update**

Ross Armstrong reported that the Division has been operating in an emergency posture and is putting children and families at the center of the work. Additional contract funds have been secured to expand the Mobile Crisis Response Team. An emergency appointment process is being used to expedite nursing and behavioral health staff appointments. Nursing shortages are statewide and constant effort is required to keep services open. An emergency lease is being completed with Clark County Department of Family Services to operate Buildings 12 and 13 (former Oasis buildings) on the Charleston campus with their service providers

operating children and foster care programs. Several applications have been made for American Rescue Plan funding, including the hardening of a unit at Desert Willow Treatment Center and Mobile Crisis expansion. Feedback is being collected from child welfare agencies for potential funding additions to the 1915i State Plan Amendment for Specialized Foster Care. Additions for data reporting resources and contracting positions for the Children's Mental Health Authority are also included. There is a funding opportunity with the Division of Public and Behavioral Health for a large bucket of funding outside of the general fund. The 1915i State Plan Amendment for Specialized Foster Care is operational, with the first youth and providers enrolled and starting to receive services. Future expansion of these services will be done through different budgetary initiatives as they become available. DCFS continues to work with the Department of Justice on Nevada's investigation. There are several personnel shifts. Mr. Armstrong's last day with DCFS will be December 13, 2021, and Dr. Cindy Pitlock has been named as Interim Administrator on his departure. She has a background in Community Services and is an APRN with clinical experience. Karla Delgado will be covering Ms. Pitlock's role over Community Services (Rural, Child Welfare, Youth Parole Bureau, WIN, Mobile Crisis, Early Childhood, and other community-based services). Dr. Dominique Rice is now the Deputy Administrator of Quality and Oversight for PEU and System of Care work. Jennifer Oullette will be coming on board over Administrative and Victim Services to replace Deputy Administrator Mandi Davis who is leaving the Agency. The division continues to remain in an emergency posture when it comes children's mental health and works to be as creative and flexible as possible to meet needs as they emerge. Jacquelyn Kleinedler and Ellen Richardson-Adams thanked Mr. Ross for his work and commitment in support of the Consortium and Nevada children's mental health.

#### **6. AB387 Voluntary Relinquishment of Custody of Children to Obtain Services**

Tina Berber-Winn described a presentation and documents she shared with the Consortium in the fall of 2021 about the bill passed by the legislature. These documents included a planning analysis for complying with the law and recommendations for a program to aid families considering relinquishing custody to provide care for a child with behavioral health issues. Several members participated in a workgroup to analyze circumstances in which children are relinquished, to identify resources within the Department of Health and Human Services, and to categorize the impressions of the child welfare agencies on what is creating difficulties in helping families who end up relinquishing children with behavioral needs.

Ms. Winn stated there are not a lot of studies on the precipitating issues. She said that factors include parents that need support to manage behavioral health issues, single parent families without resources, or families with possible previous involvement in some system of care agency prior to relinquishing a child (possibly multiple times). She recommends the assessment teams that are required under this law be situated within the WIN program, based on the training that the staff currently receives, as well as the assessment and support that the program is designed to offer families. She also recommended the inclusion of additional staff with skillsets in autism and development mental health services be made available to the department clinical assessment teams to work with families on a volunteer basis to come up with a plan of care and work with families throughout the decision-making process prior to and during a crisis leading up to relinquishing a child. The assessment team (a department collaboration) needs to be doing outreach to entities such as child welfare agencies to work

proactively to identify families who might be in a situation of need and potential distress, experiencing degradation of family structure, etc. Working with families early on is the best preventative. There are several reporting requirements within the law that DCFS is already managing within their staffing in collaboration with the counties on the annual reporting of children that are relinquished due to mental or behavioral health issues and the lack of access to care.

Jacquelyn Kleinedler reminded Consortium members that this item was kept on the agenda to bring it back as a possible action item in case the body wanted to form an action or response to the information. Kristen Rivas clarified that this is an action item.

Karen Taycher asked Ms. Winn if there was action that she would like to see from the Consortium. Ms. Winn responded that it would be helpful to have support from the Consortium by giving a recommendation to the department to continue working on this with someone appointed to revise and implement the plan and suggestions she offered. She would encourage someone to pick it up and continue to move it forward. She thanked Ms. Taycher for her support in providing research on specialized populations in conjunction with some of the things that have been tried for children with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Dr. Linning pointed out that there is already attention to this matter under the Collaboratives Pathways program led by Ann Polakowski. Clark County has a mechanism for making referrals right at the beginning of a CPS hotline call when there is a child in need of attention for a same-day release and relinquishment for services. They are taking the calls and getting these cases connected to collaborative services and resources in Clark County. She stated she feels this is a good start and a strong collaboration with DCFS in getting this type of family support. Ms. Winn suggested that this needs to be replicated statewide to serve Rural and Northern Nevada on a comparable basis. She stated there was supposed to be on an ongoing workgroup/taskforce appointed in July 2021, which is required under the Legislature to monitor the situation and continue pushing forth the idea of available clinical teams to assist families in distress. She is not sure if that group was appointed. Dena Schmidt said there it would be helpful to have the DCFS staff provide more information and that she also has staff assigned to work on this (both clinical and care coordination teams are meeting weekly). They are working their way through the policies and procedures and have already received a referral. They are working to iron out the procedures as they work with these complex cases, following basic procedures and working with families on a case-by-case basis. She offered to provide more information if it would be helpful to the group. Karen Taycher asked who was heading up the effort and if it only involved Clark County. Ross Armstrong responded that the effort is statewide and is currently run out of the WIN program under the Community Services Deputy Administrator, Katie Brubaker (Program Manager) and Ann Polakowski. Ms. Taycher also asked about the re-establishment of the advisory group. Mr. Armstrong replied that the advisory group appointments have not expired, and they would meet annually to look at the program and see if changes are needed. There is also an administrative team with representatives from each division that can be triggered if the clinical teams on the ground need assistance to help a family. Ms. Taycher asked how processes can be safeguarded and maintained when administrators change, and personnel are shifted with

changing priorities. Mr. Armstrong clarified that AB387 within the Statue has this as a program of the Director's office, which would be the resource going forward if there are issues.

Dena Schmit asked if there was a motion to move this forward. There was no motion stated. Jacquelyn Kleinedler asked Mr. Armstrong to clarify that the Washoe County services were housed under WIN. Mr. Armstrong clarified that the AB387 program focus is very narrow and specific as to the nature of what services qualify as a family who is about to relinquish their child to a child welfare agency only for the purposes of accessing mental health services. WIN services are available to all families. Ms. Schmit recommended this item remain on the agenda for the next meeting with a request to have Ann Polakowski give an outline of next steps, which children qualify, and what processes to follow. Ms. Schmit volunteered to have her team co-present with the DCFS team. Ellen Richardson-Adams thanked Ms. Winn for coming to the meeting.

**7. Nevada on a Mental Health Crisis Hold Brochure in response to AB387 Legislative Session 2019**

This item will be tabled until the next meeting.

**8. DCFS Planning and Evaluation Unit (PEU – 2020-2021 Juvenile Justice Youth Facilities Presentation**

Susie Miller gave a PowerPoint presentation with a comprehensive overview of the DCFS Planning and Evaluation Unit and the three DCFS Juvenile Justice facilities (Summit View Youth Center, Caliente Youth Center & Nevada Youth Training Center). She also reported that the Department of Justice (DOJ) investigation is ongoing and provided updated statistics. Karen Taycher commended Ms. Miller on the work and improvements being made in conjunction with the Department of Justice investigation. Charlene Frost asked which higher-level facilities are housing females. Ms. Miller explained that they are being treated at the Caliente Youth Center and that females certified as adults are not in the juvenile system. Karen Taycher asked to get copies of the meeting materials prior to the meetings and requested a copy of Ms. Miller's presentation. Salwa Philips will follow up to send the presentation and materials. Jacquelyn Kleinedler commented that juvenile justice-involved youth are crossover youth who are also involved in mental health/substance abuse programs in almost 100% of the cases. She would like to see periodic updates in future meetings. Kristen Rivas will mark this topic as an agenda item in six months. Susie Miller reported that SB366 is doing a study on the competency restoration and evaluation for youth, which is also a population that often is of concern in making sure they get the proper care. Ms. Miller will bring SB366 updates to the Consortium. Ellen Richardson commented that she has visited two of the facilities and gave kudos to the facility teams. Meeting members did not have an action item to bring forth at this time.

**9. Update on System of Care (SOC) Grant**

Kathy Cavakis was not present. Bill Wyss, new SOC Grant Manager, reported that the grant is focused on frontier and rural communities, and is launching multi-dimensional family therapy with Grant and Mineral counties to look at increasing intensive services. This is a family treatment intervention for youth with behavioral needs and their families. Approval

has been received for the Self-Directed Respite Grant. A draft of the Cultural Intervention Training (a Class V national model) is being developed which looks at advancing health equity, improving quality, and helping to eliminate healthcare disparities. Work is in progress with Charlene Frost and Karen Taycher to incorporate the parent's perspective and develop an operational plan for the distribution of funds for both the Self-Directed Respite Grant and the Cultural Intervention Training. Two staff members are now trained in the Child & Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS Tool), which is a project the Grant has scheduled for September 2023 to collect data on how that tool can be utilized in the community.

**10. Update on Collaboration with DPBH and the Regional Behavioral Health Policy Boards to Identify Gaps and Assets in the Existing Children's Crisis Continuum of Care with Focus on 988**

Kelly Marschall asked if the focus was to provide an update to the July meeting or to look at next steps in terms of the crisis system mapping for children. Jacquelyn Kleinedler responded with an inquiry about the progress status related to the children's side of 988. Ms. Marschall then gave a PowerPoint presentation entitled, "Nevada's Crisis Response System". Dr. Stephanie Woodward also contributed presentation information and answered questions. Ross Armstrong posted a Lifesize chat link for the current solicitation. Dr. Woodward invited everyone to participate in the 988 Planning Coalition group (which is not under Open Meeting Law). The meeting contact person was posted in the Lifesize chat, along with the SCI website, resources, information, and meeting recordings. Ellen Richardson-Adams thanked Ms. Marschall and Dr. Woodward for the presentation and invited them to return when updates are available.

**11. Regional Consortia Prior Minutes Questions**

Jacquelyn Kleinedler, Chair, Washoe County Mental Health Consortium (WCMHC), reported on a project to understand why different Medicaid providers (particularly MCOs) have different formularies for family prescription drug benefits. The goal is to come up with a request to Medicaid to align the formularies so that when families are asked to switch, they don't have difficulty getting medications filled. A dynamic resource directory for Washoe County medical providers was recently launched on the website. This allows providers to create their own username and password to update their own listings and program information.

Dan Musgrove, Chair, Clark County Mental Health Consortium (CCMHC), reported continued focus on school issues, discussions about how children with special needs are treated, as well as a current crisis in Clark County dealing with children in Child Haven and the University Medical Center that really should not be in those facilities. There was an impact with the closure of Desert Oasis and there is a task force consisting of the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada, Clark County, the District Attorney's Office, and the Clark County Mental Health Consortium now working on those issues. Mr. Musgrove stated that Dr. Freeman brought this issue forward previously and it is an issue that has been a problem for a long time. This problem puts staff and children in an unsafe situation at Child Haven on the Clark County campus. Mr. Musgrove stated that the CCMHC minutes are available, and everyone is welcome to join the meetings.

Melissa Washabaugh, Chair, Rural Children’s Mental Health Consortium (RCMHC), reported on a project to get quotes for a website re-design with the goal of disseminating community information. The newly designed website will launch in the next couple of months. Lists of community events, resource lists, NV PEP supplies, and other grass-roots community information will be included. A plan is in progress to provide gift cards or other incentives for community stakeholders to take training classes such as Mental Health First Aid, Safe-Talk or Zero-to-Three classes for evaluating young children.

All three consortia will be working on their Ten-Year Strategic Plan Updates and Karen Taycher suggested working together and collaborating. Ms. Taycher recommended the statewide Consortium send a letter as well, including the regional priorities. Ellen Richardson-Adams will set a future agenda item to include the Ten-Year Strategic Plan presentations from the three regional consortia once they are complete so that a combined, collaborative letter can be written.

## **12. Update on Co-Located Services or School Based Access to Mental Health Supports**

Katherine Loudon (Washoe County School District) said she was happy to hear about the expansion of Mobile Crisis. Washoe County School District (WSCD) has been working to build staff capacity through teacher support groups. Marriage and Family therapist partners are offering virtual teacher support groups to certified staff (teachers, nurses, counselors) and administrators. The Washoe County Education Association, which is the educational union, also partnered to distribute the information. The Washoe County School District, with the Social Workers in Schools Grant and with some of the mental health funding, prioritized spending on co-located, integrated mental health services and wellness as key priorities. As a result, a specialized job description called “Mental Health Professional” was created at an administrative level. The Nevada Department of Education has an educational license for mental health professionals (marriage and family therapists or licensed clinical social workers). Eight positions for this new role, 19 new social workers, and full-time time school counselors in every school as a point of contact, were added. The district is exploring and expanding the community schools’ model for additional co-located, integrated services and has been working with UNR, community schools, and other partners to have integrated, co-located services on these campuses. Positive outcomes are already being achieved in those areas where this work is being done. The district is a recipient of the Project Aware Grant which has a focus on mental health awareness and co-located, integrated partnerships This grant benefits seven schools. Those key, seven schools are spending time with the statewide Aware Initiative making sure these programs are in place. The district was also recently selected by the Center for Disease Control and the American Institute for Research and is going to be able to identify opportunities for patterns among referrals for professional development and capacity building in schools. Under the guidance of the Division of School Health, a swat analysis of what the collective team is doing statewide is in progress, with goal of improving Washoe County processes in addressing children’s mental health and comprehensive ways to provide student service and support. Another project involves re-working and expanding a plan to have telehealth services for both medical and mental health. This plan will benefit staff and program capacity building and increased access to services to

offset the time it takes staff to become fully licensed. Focus will continue to build expanded partnerships and explore ways to add co-located, partnerships, positions, and integrated services in district schools.

**13. Recommendations for representatives from Clark County School District and Rural School Districts for Update on Regional School Based Health Centers.**

Ellen Richardson-Adams said the Consortium is looking for representatives from the Clark County School District and the Rural School Districts to provide updates on the Regional School Based Health Centers. She asked if anyone could provide the name of an appropriate contact person to contact for this purpose. Karen Taycher will investigate the contact for the Clark County School District and will forward the name to Kristen Rivas. Potential contacts and leads for the Rural District were discussed and posted to the Lifesize chat for further investigation.

**14. Announcements**

Jacquelyn Kleinedler reported receiving conflicting information about 24x7 Mobile Crisis response services vs. a 7:00 pm cutoff of in-person services in Washoe County. She asked if anyone was aware of the status of in-person response hours. Charlene Frost explained that Mobile Crisis 24x7 response is provided via telehealth, and that in-person responses still end at 7:00 pm. Ms. Kleinedler stated that feedback from families in the community is that they don't perceive the Las Vegas staff response as a helpful service because of the vast geographic distance and resource differences. Ms. Kleinedler said she is grateful for the 24x7 telehealth access, and she still wants to keep pressing for 24x7 in-person resources for Washoe County families in need.

**15. Make Recommendations for Agenda Items for the Next Meeting**

- Children's Mobile Crisis resources in Northern Nevada and a Mobile Crisis Response Update
- Regional Consortia Ten-Year Strategic Plan Update
- Nevada Children's Behavioral Health Consortium 2022 Meeting Schedule
- Mental Health Crisis Brochure in Response to 8387 (Jessica Flood)
- Voluntary Relinquishment of Child Custody and a status update from DCFS and ADSD
- Deputy Pitlock, new interim DCFS Administrator – Transitioning Agenda Item No. 5 from Ross Armstrong to Dr. Pitlock.
- Update from Susie Miller on the other facilities under her purview since Oasis is partially closing.
- Follow-up on the Medicaid Formulary request to Medicaid to possibly write and send a letter.
- A presentation from a Medicaid to talk about their formulary and spending plan. Kristen Rivas clarified that Medicaid is a standing agenda item unless there are too many items on the agenda, causing some items to alternate every-other meeting. It was determined that the February 2022 meeting will include Medicaid. Dena Schmidt will send the point of contact name to Ms. Rivas.
- An update from DCFS/DHHS on the health care crisis in Washoe County (impact of West Hills Hospital closure)



16. **Public Comment.** *No action may be taken upon a matter raised during a period devoted to comments by the general public until the matter itself has been specifically included on an agenda as an item upon which action may be taken.*

There were no public comments.

17. **Adjournment**

Ellen Richardson-Adams adjourned the meeting at 4:10 p.m.